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An opportunity for the promotion of better...

Washington

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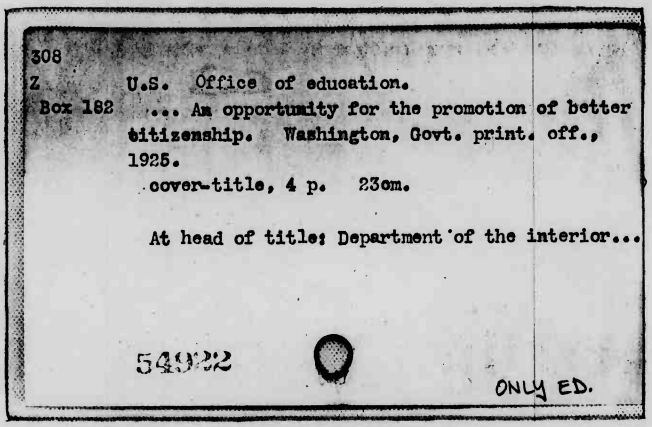
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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PROMOTION OF BETTER CITIZENSHIP

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1925

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AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PROMOTION OF BETTER CITIZENSHIP

THE UNITED STATES IS PROSPEROUS.

The people of the United States are 6 per cent of the world's population; yet, though we are thus outnumbered 16 to 1—

We own nearly half the railroad mileage and almost three-fourths of the telephone equipment in the world;

We consume more than half the world's output of coal, iron, steel, copper, petroleum, cotton, timber, and printing paper;

We own nine out of every ten automobiles in the world—

BUT—

Only half of our eligible voters actually vote even at the presidential elections;

Five millions of our people over 10 years of age are illiterate;

Ten millions of our children of school age are not attending school;

We spend more for tobacco, cosmetics, and chewing gum than we do for education;

Half of our young men were found physically unfit for unlimited military service;

Our wage earners lose wages amounting to over two billion dollars a year because of preventable sickness;

In 1900 the number of homicides per 100,000 population in cities was 3.5. Now it is 9.3.

In 1870 there was 1 divorce for every 18 marriages. Last year there was 1 divorce for every 8 marriages.

COOPERATION FOR CIVIC IMPROVEMENT.

More than 2,000 voluntary organizations in this country are working, each in its own way, to develop better citizenship and higher standards of civic life. Much good is being accomplished by their work. Might not their efforts yield even greater results if their energies were united in a common drive to achieve an inspiring common objective which all realize is most worth while?

WOULD MAKE THIS NATION TRULY GREAT.

Our national experience during the war illustrated how a great common purpose released national energy, inspired forgetfulness of

personal interests, and caused men to sacrifice individual ambition and to work without limit for the achievement of a common objective. We are the same people that we were during the war. We are, however, no longer working together with the eagerness for national service that marked our war-time activities. The reason for this is not that we have changed as a people, nor because we have lost our national spirit, but rather because we are not aware of a clearly defined single objective which inspires all to coordinated action and team play for the common welfare.

THE IDEALS OF AMERICA.

The most complete and dynamic statement of the ideals and objectives to which this Nation is dedicated is found in the preamble to the Constitution:

> **We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.**

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CITIZENSHIP TRAINING.

Realizing that the achievement of these national objectives requires their interpretation in terms of practical daily experiences and that mutual understanding and cooperation among the administrative departments of the Federal Government are essential to effective service in this matter, President Harding, in February, 1923, with the unanimous concurrence of all members of the Cabinet, issued an Executive order establishing the Federal Council of Citizenship Training. This council is composed of men in the Government service who are actively engaged in administering offices that deal with particular phases of citizenship training.

CHARTED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

As a basis for mutual understanding the Federal Council of Citizenship Training made a chart which shows what each executive department is doing for better citizenship and what lines of communication each has with the States and the people.

DEVELOPED A COMMUNITY SCORE CARD.

In its search for practical criteria that reveal when the national objectives of good citizenship are realized, the council discovered that a Community Score Card had been found very effective in several States, not only in stimulating local initiative and developing competition among communities for excellence in the essentials of good citizenship, but also in creating a truly American community spirit, and in improving conditions of recreation, health, homes,

schools, churches, business, and farms. The council, therefore, developed a Community Score Card designed to serve as a reliable means of stimulating communities to evaluate their own successes and failures and thus to discover for themselves what they could do to realize more fully the national ideals and thus become better places in which to live.

STATE COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN FORMED.

President Coolidge invited the governors of the several States to take the initiative in organizing intercommunity competitions, using a community score card to define the rules of the game. As a result of this appeal, cooperating committees have been formed in 22 States, and competitions are now under way in several States.

INTEREST IN COMMUNITY LIFE IS KEEN.

There is everywhere a profound devotion to American ideals and a deep latent interest in the relative standing among States and communities with regard to American citizenship. This latent interest may be made active through proper leadership and through the wise use of funds with which to stage intercommunity contests on such a scale as to command general interest. Herein lies a unique opportunity for great public service in this most fundamental matter of developing a citizenry able and eager to carry on successfully this greatest of experiments in self-government.

BUT LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED.

The Federal Council and the State committees are without funds for the accomplishment of this purpose, but they believe that there are in every State many citizens who are looking for an opportunity to contribute of their means for the promotion of public welfare. They further believe that the score-card method of building better citizenship in each particular State, and therefore in the Nation, is an enterprise from which greater results can be secured for less expenditure of time and money than in any other way. By suitable prizes and effective publicity, the energy of the people can be released in the direction of working spontaneously together to express the ideals of America in better citizenship as defined in the Community Score Card.

PRACTICAL PROCEDURE.

The Federal Council of Citizenship Training has issued, besides the Community Score Card, a pamphlet describing its own experience and suggesting how a State or a community may proceed practically to initiate this enterprise. For further information apply to the chairman of the council, the Commissioner of Education, United States Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

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